

Chapter 1 - Project Origination

Purpose

The purpose of Project Origination is to evaluate projects proposed for the next planning cycle and to reach a consensus on the projects to be selected. During this phase, the strength of a project's Business Case is tested, and the viability of the Proposed Solution is explored. A determination is made as to whether the project is consistent with the agency's strategic plan and affordable within budget guidelines.

Selecting the wrong project is a very costly, and sometimes devastating mistake that many organizations make. Even a great idea may not be worth expending the resources or accepting the associated risk. Or the project may simply need to be delayed until more resources are available or the associated risk can be mitigated.

Selecting the right projects in the wrong combination and, therefore, overextending the organization's resources can be just as devastating. It is not always easy to see why good Project Origination procedures, resulting in a well thought out selection of projects, are so critical to the success of the Performing Organization.



If your agency's Project Proposal process is established and the information in this chapter does not apply, it is still critical to follow the steps for developing a strong Business Case and Proposed Solution.

The Project Proposal process may actually be part of the budget cycle, serving as the justification for budget requests. In this case, Project Proposals may need to be created a full budget cycle prior to the project's anticipated initiation. Other factors that impact Project Origination include statutory requirements, regulations, legislative restrictions, and civil service rules.



As mentioned above, the Project Proposal process may be part of the budget cycle, therefore it is important to understand your budget planning, development, and approval process, including how the State Legislature appropriates funds.

Each organization has its own approach to green-lighting desired projects. The approach outlined below is only one of many possible variations of the evaluation and selection process. There are some general principles, however, that apply to any effective evaluation and selection process:

- ❑ The deciding body must have enough information about the merits of the project's Business Case and the viability of its Proposed Solution to make a meaningful evaluation;
- ❑ The competing projects' merits must be evaluated and compared using a consistently applied methodology;
- ❑ The selection process must take into consideration the project's fit with the organizational mission and strategic plan.

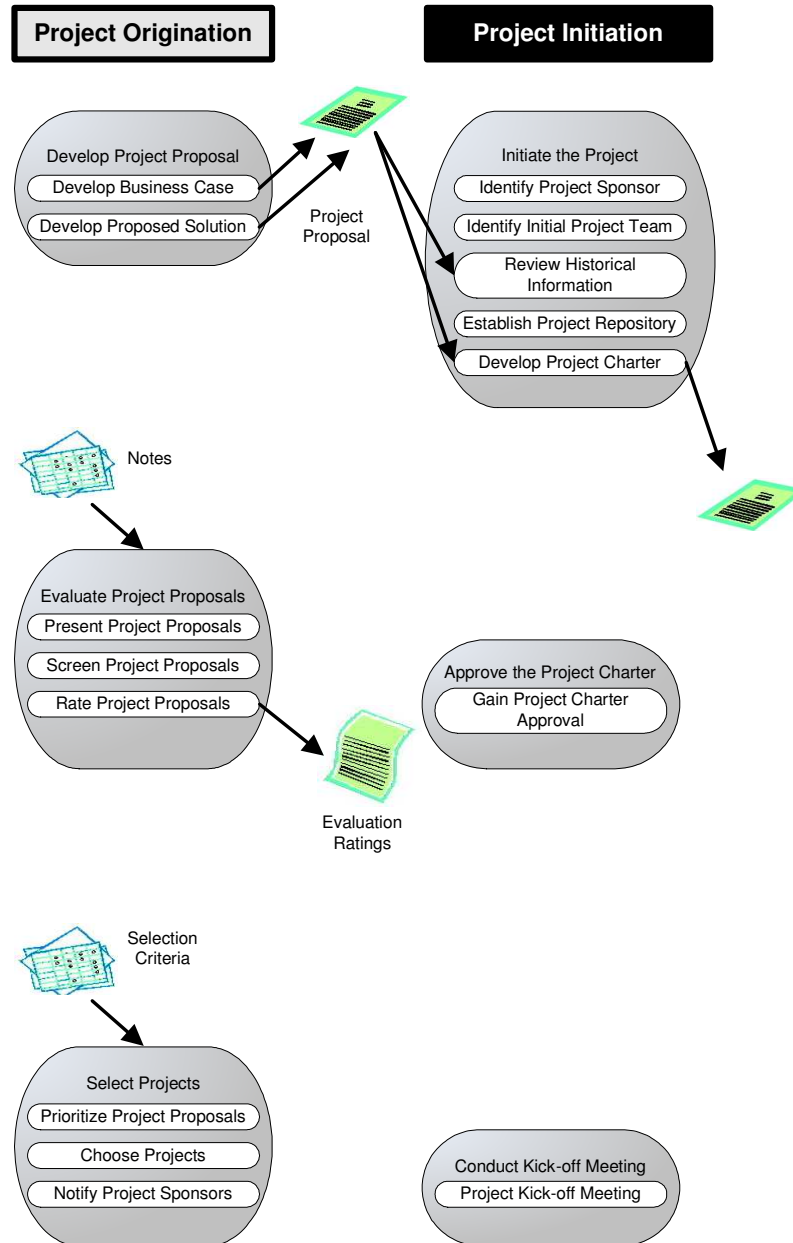
List of Processes

The three major processes in this phase of the project management lifecycle are:

- 1.1 Develop Project Proposal**, where the initial Business Case is made, and initial project parameters are defined;
- 1.2 Evaluate Project Proposals**, where cost/benefit analysis is performed, and the projects are evaluated against a set of specific business criteria; and
- 1.3 Select Projects**, where a consensus is reached on the project's feasibility and relative importance in comparison to other proposed projects, and a decision is formally made regarding the Project Proposal.

The following chart illustrates all of the processes, tasks, and deliverables of this phase in the context of the project management lifecycle.

Figure 1-1 Project Origination in the Project Management Lifecycle



List of Roles

The following roles are involved in carrying out the processes of this phase. The detailed descriptions of these roles can be found in the Preface.

- ☐ Project Sponsor
- ☐ Project Proposal Team
- ☐ Project Selection Committee

List of Deliverables

Since a Project Manager is not assigned to the project until the Initiation Phase, members of the Performing Organization Management are responsible for preparing and reviewing Project Origination deliverables.

Figure 1-2 lists all Project Origination tasks and their deliverables. A deliverable is a measurable, tangible, verifiable product. The items in italics are *outcomes*, which are more similar to results versus tangible deliverables.

Figure 1-2 Project Origination Deliverables

Processes	Tasks	Deliverables and <i>Outcomes</i>
Develop Project Proposal	Develop Business Case	Business Case
	Develop Proposed Solution	Proposed Solution
Evaluate Project Proposals	Present Project Proposal	<i>Project Proposal Understanding</i>
	Screen Project Proposals	<i>Proposals Removed from Further Consideration</i>
	Rate Project Proposals	Evaluation Ratings
Select Projects	Prioritize Project Proposals	<i>Prioritized Proposals</i>
	Choose Projects	<i>Selected Projects</i>
	Notify Project Sponsor	Proposal Decision Notice



Sometimes it is necessary for a project manager to be involved at this early stage of the project. If this occurs, and you are the project manager in this case, take extra measures to ensure that members of the Performing Organization Management are still heavily involved. Without their strong support of the origination of a project, the project can be doomed to problems before it even begins.

1.1 Develop Project Proposal

Purpose

Before a project can be selected for initiation, a persuasive case must be made for its viability, given current organizational priorities. In **Develop Project Proposal**, the initial Business Case for the project is formulated, and all information required for project selection is formalized in the Proposed Solution. A proposal for a project may come from any place in the Performing Organization, but someone must be identified as the “owner” of the proposal, and must serve as Project Sponsor, at least through the evaluation and selection process. The Project Sponsor may be in executive management, in a specific functional program area, or a representative of the Customers or the Consumers within the Performing Organization.

Roles for this Step

Project Sponsor
Project Proposal Team



Since information from the Business Case is included in the Proposed Solution – and vice versa – the tasks to develop those documents should be performed not consecutively, but concurrently, with one document informing and influencing the other.

Tasks

1.1.1 Develop Business Case

The Business Case is one of the defining documents of the project, providing information necessary to support the decision to launch the project at the end of Project Origination and to continue the

Tasks for this Step

Develop Business Case
Develop Proposed Solution

project in subsequent phases. The Business Case must identify an existing business need and lay the foundation for developing a potential solution to meet that need. The cost of implementing the solution must be estimated and compared to the benefits gained, and justification for the potential project should also depend on whether the project is consistent with the organization's mission. For a sample Business Case template, (see Appendix I / Template A - Project Business Case Template).

The Business Case must provide a compelling case for the project. A careful study should be made of expected benefits to the organization implementing the project. An analysis of the costs, benefits and risks associated with the proposed approach can be made, and the justification necessary to obtain the proper level of commitment from the decision-maker(s) can be formulated.

The Business Case can also identify special funding sources available for the proposed initiative, and should align the project's costs with the agency budget cycle. If the project is going to span multiple budget cycles, a multi-year strategy for project funding should be discussed with the agency fiscal officer, who may find it useful to review the Business Case with another constituency.



During Project Origination, any estimates are acknowledged to be high-level at best. As the project progresses through the Initiation and Planning phases, those estimates will become more precise as more is learned about the true parameters of the project, and additional go/no go decisions will be made based on the latest information. It is also important to note that, in order to define project parameters with adequate precision, Initiation and Planning will require substantial resources, and initial estimates should reflect that fact.

It may be advisable to include whether the project is required as a result of federal or state legislative action, gubernatorial or executive mandates, or agency program priorities.

Before presenting the proposal for evaluation, the Project Sponsor should have the Business Case reviewed by the people most intimately familiar with its imperatives – Customer Decision-Makers.

The Business Case will continue to be a critical component of the decision-making process throughout the entire project management lifecycle – from the initial decision to proceed with the project to the

decisions made at periodic project reviews to continue, modify or terminate the project. At the end of each project management phase and whenever there is a significant change to the project or the business function, the Business Case will be reviewed and re-validated.



Additional Business Case Requirements for Large Projects: Pursuant to ND Century Code 54-35-15.2 and STD009-98, large information technology projects must submit a copy of the Project Business Case to the ITD Policy and Planning Division. A large information technology project is defined in NDCC 54-35-15.2 as follows: “a project with a cost of two hundred fifty thousand dollars or more in one biennium or a total cost of five hundred thousand dollars or more.” For more information, refer to the ITD web site at <http://www.state.nd.us/itd/planning/lar-pro-rep.html>.

1.1.2 Develop Proposed Solution

A Proposed Solution includes a summary of the business need (abstracted from the Business Case) and a definition of the optimal solution to address that need.

The Proposed Solution should include an evaluation of all alternatives considered, and a justification of the solution selected. The basis of time and cost estimates for the Proposed Solution (expert judgment, availability of historical data on similar projects, Request For Information (RFI) responses, etc.), as well as the accuracy of the estimates (+/- 100%, +/- 50%, etc.), should be documented.

For a sample Proposed Solution template, see Appendix I / Template B - Proposed Solution Template.



If the Performing Organization uses standard evaluation forms/ formats, the Proposed Solution may include a “self-assessment” performed by the Project Sponsor or the Project Proposal Team. Such a self-assessment may assist the Project Sponsor to realize weaknesses in the proposal before formal submission for evaluation and selection.

The completed Proposed Solution is combined with the Business Case to complete the Project Proposal, which will be presented to the project evaluation and selection process.



It is highly advisable to have an independent party verify the Proposed Solution and associated estimates.

1.2 Evaluate Project Proposals

Purpose

Many organizations generate multiple proposals for various new initiatives on a continuing basis; however, budgetary and other constraints allow only a fraction of those efforts to occur. Choosing the right projects, which support the organization's mission and assist with the implementation of its strategic plan, becomes a crucial activity, starting with an objective evaluation of proposed initiatives.

Roles for this Step

Project Sponsor

Project Selection Committee

Evaluate Project Proposals presents an approach to rating competing proposals in a methodical, impartial fashion; the results are indispensable to the success of the subsequent project selection process. Organizations may implement this process in a variety of ways – from relying on unilateral decisions of a chief executive or designee, to convening cross-functional deliberative councils. The tasks presented below are designed to illustrate the components of an effective proposal screening and evaluation process, and not to prescribe a particular format required to reach a desired objective.

The frequency of an organization's evaluation/selection process may be dictated by many factors, including the size of the proposed projects, the variances of the budget cycle, and the occurrence of external mandates and internal imperatives.



State Information Technology Advisory Committee (SITAC) Project Prioritization Process: The SITAC is a committee in state government comprised of agency directors, private sector IT leaders, and legislators, with responsibility to prioritize major IT projects prior to inclusion in the Executive Budget.



Higher Education Project Approval Process: The approvals required for IT and related technology projects differ for Higher Education than for State Government. Depending on scope and cost of the project, approvals may be required beyond the department and Vice President at an institution. It may require approval from the campus CIO and the institution's Cabinet, NDUS CIO, one or more of the senior Councils, NDUS Cabinet, State Board of Higher Education, and Legislature. Additionally, the IT and related technology projects should have been included in the institution's strategic IT plan.

Tasks

1.2.1 Present Project Proposals

Because the quality and level of detail among typical Project Proposals tends to vary a great deal, it is beneficial to allow the Project Sponsor to make a case for the project in person. This also allows decision-makers to ask questions and gather additional information on the spot, without resorting to more formal – and slower – channels of communication.

Tasks for this Step

Present Project Proposals
Screen Project Proposals
Rate Project Proposals

The presentation should be based on the Proposed Solution and the Business Case, but it can take many forms – from a formal slide presentation to an informal run-through of existing material. The objective is to allow the decision-makers to interact with those who best understand the business reasons for the initiative, and its Proposed Solution.

1.2.2 Screen Project Proposals

Before a great deal of effort is expended on rating, prioritizing and selecting presented projects, it may be useful to screen competing proposals by asking some important questions, such as:

- ☐ Does the project support the organization's mission?
- ☐ Does the Proposed Solution align with the organization's strategic plan/technical architecture?
- ☐ Is there an available/plausible funding source for this effort?

- ❑ Does the project's cost/benefit analysis justify its initiation? Furthermore, what additional benefits other than cost savings, can justify the project's initiation?

Unless a project is legislatively (or otherwise) mandated, simply working through these questions will result in elimination of some proposals from further consideration. The Project Sponsor should be notified, and the decision should be documented on the Proposal Decision Notice form ([see Appendix I / Template D](#)).

1.2.3 Rate Project Proposals

Rating of Project Proposals is generally performed by executive management or by a group designated by executive management (Project Selection Committee). The group may meet on a regular or an as-needed basis to perform this function, or the rating of proposals may be an integral part of the organizational strategic/tactical planning and budgeting process.

The process is usually formal, with specific forms/formats and procedures. In smaller organizations, however, it may be more informal, and may even be combined with the selection process. In these cases, a brief presentation to the Commissioner, Director, or other organization head may be all that is required to commit resources (funding, personnel, equipment, etc.) and initiate the project.

Proposals are generally rated according to a set of specific business criteria. The process may include a broad technical review to determine if the proposal follows current agency standards and technical architectures. The funding associated with a project is also a critical component of the rating process. A Performing Organization may have unique rules regarding funding for proposals. During Project Origination, the Project Sponsor must identify whether funds are expected from the Performing Organization's current/future operating budget, or whether additional funding sources are available.

The level of approvals needed may vary depending on whether the project exceeds or falls below defined thresholds. Thresholds may be based on cost, involvement of more than one functional area, project needs within or outside of standards and procedures, or other areas specific to the Performing Organization. The rating process generally assigns a score to each project, to inform the selection process. [See Appendix I / Template C](#), for the Project Ranking Matrix. This matrix is required for large projects requiring SITAC review, but may also be used internally for smaller projects that do not require large project oversight.

1.3 Select Projects

Purpose

Once the Project Proposals have been uniformly and objectively rated, it is necessary to prioritize them to reflect how they compare to one another in various aspects, including supporting current organizational priorities, the mission and the strategic plan. At that point in the **Select Projects** process, a decision can be made as to how many of the top-rated proposals can be accommodated by the agency's budget, resources, and ability to absorb organizational change. Whether the project is approved, declined, or sent back for additional information, the Project Sponsor must be notified, and the decision documented.

Roles for this Step

Project Sponsor
Project Selection Committee

Tasks

1.3.1 Prioritize Project Proposals

Quantitative ratings derived through the evaluation process make the prioritization process a simple matter of sorting the higher scores to the top. However, it may be useful to review the generic rating criteria once again and decide if some additional measurements are needed. Complying with legislative mandates or executive chamber initiatives, for example, may trump even well conceived process improvement opportunities.

These are the factors evaluated to determine a project's feasibility and its relative importance in comparison to other proposed projects. Whatever the final set of criteria, they should be documented and applied equally to each competing proposal, to enable a fair and competent selection process.

Tasks for this Step

Prioritize Project Proposals
Choose Projects
Notify Project Sponsors
&
Project Selection Committee

1.3.2 Choose Projects

A committee of executives from the Performing Organization usually makes project selection decisions. Even if the Commissioner or other agency head (Chairman, Director, etc.) makes the final decision, a

Project Selection Committee generally reviews and develops recommendations. It may be useful to, once again, invite the Project Sponsor to make a presentation to the Committee and answer questions.

The Project Selection Committee must choose projects that, in combination, will provide the best investment for the Performing Organization. The Committee considers competing priorities in determining what is best for the whole. All proposals must be evaluated in the context of other proposals, current projects and ongoing operations in order to set priorities and determine resource availability. This process may be accomplished through discussion and vote, or the Committee may use specific tools (software, spreadsheets, etc.) designed to facilitate comparison of the proposals.

The projects chosen as a result of this process may not necessarily reflect what is best for an individual employee or a single work unit. Sometimes a lower-priority project will be approved simply because it is low-risk or low-cost, and can deliver needed benefits or services. Sometimes a project can be undertaken because it needs few resources, and can be performed while larger initiatives are delayed. Projects may be approved for immediate action or with a delay for obtaining resources. It is also possible that a proposal could be returned to the Project Sponsor for further development without approval or rejection.

Choosing a project does not necessarily guarantee that the project will be undertaken by the Performing Organization. That is generally dependent upon the availability of necessary funding. Each Performing Organization may have a different process whereby chosen projects are actually authorized to proceed to Project Initiation.

1.3.3 Notify Project Sponsors

Once the decisions have been made, it is imperative to document them and to explain their rationale to the Project Sponsors and other Stakeholders. One of three outcomes can occur:

1. A decision is made to proceed with the project. In this case, a determination must be made when Project Initiation can begin. At that point a Project Manager must be assigned to the project. The finance office must be brought on board to ensure adequate funding for the project, and control agencies may be notified that the project is being initiated.
2. A decision cannot be made on the project without some additional information. In this case, the specific information required for an informed decision should be documented, and communicated to the

Project Sponsor, along with some guidelines for submitting the proposal again in the next evaluation/selection cycle.

3. A decision is made to decline the proposal. In this case, a detailed explanation for the decision should accompany the message, outlining where the proposal came up short in the screening, evaluation, prioritization and/or selection. In all three cases, the same Proposal Decision Notice can be used to document and communicate the decision (See Appendix I / Template D).

Project Origination End-of-Phase Checklist

How to Use: Use this checklist throughout Project Origination to help ensure that all requirements of the phase are met. As each item is completed, indicate its completion date. Use the Comments column to add information that may be helpful to you as you proceed through the project. If you elect NOT to complete an item on the checklist, indicate the reason and describe how the objectives of that item are otherwise being met.

Figure 1-3 Project Origination End-of-Phase Checklist

Item Description	Completion Date	Comments and/or Reason for Not Completing
Develop Project Proposal:		
Formulate business need/ problem and anticipated benefits to all parties		
Review project's fit with organization's mission		
Identify project objectives		
Research potential approaches and solutions		
Identify and recommend one (or more) chosen solution(s)		
Review solution's fit with organization's strategic plan		
Estimate costs of all resources and materials required for the project, both initial and recurring		
Identify potential project risks		
Identify organizational impacts of the project		
Identify any legislative, regulatory or policy dependencies or implications of the project		
Perform project cost/benefit analysis		
Identify project funding strategies		

Item Description	Completion Date	Comments and/or Reason for Not Completing
Complete Business Case and Proposed Solution forms		
Submit a copy of the Business Case to ITD Policy & Planning		
Evaluate Project Proposals:		
Submit Project Proposal to the Selection process		
Schedule and conduct proposal presentation		
Identify and/or utilize proposal screening criteria		
Identify and/or utilize proposal rating criteria and methods		
Select Projects:		
Identify and/or utilize proposal prioritization criteria		
Evaluate projects' requirements vs. organizational capacity		
Recommend projects for selection		
Choose projects for initiation		
Notify Project Sponsor of unfavorable screening outcome		
Document decision process and outcome for each proposal		
Complete Proposal Decision Notice forms		
Get signatures from Project Selection Committee members		
Notify Project Sponsor(s)		

Measurements of Success

Success in Project Origination is not only receiving permission to proceed on the proposed project, but also understanding the executive decision, which often results in a greater understanding of the organization's mission.

During Project Origination, certain assumptions and projections are made regarding the main project parameters – cost, benefit, scope, and timeframe. These initial estimates are used to rate the project under consideration against all other competing initiatives. The main measurement of success for Project Origination is the consensus of the Performing Organization Management that the projects were weighed fairly, and that the ones with the most compelling Business Case received a green light.

Before the final project selection, it is possible to assess how successfully the evaluation process is proceeding by utilizing the measurements outlined below. More than one “No” answer indicates a serious risk to the desired consensus described above.

Figure 1-4 - Checklist for Measuring the Success of Project Origination

Process	Measurements of Success	Yes	No
Develop Project Proposal	Have the anticipated benefits been reviewed and accepted by the Customer?		
	Does the expected outcome of the project support the organization's mission?		
	Does the Proposed Solution address only the agenda described by the business problem?		
	Has an independent party assessed the estimated costs and resources?		
	Does the Project Proposal make clear how various approaches/solutions were considered and evaluated, and why a particular solution is being proposed?		
Evaluate Project Proposals	Was the project rated on all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic alignment? • Risk? • Proposed Solution? • Cost? • Benefit? • Funding? 		
	Were the evaluation criteria applied equally to all projects under consideration?		
Select Projects	Does the Project Proposal Team understand the reasons for the project's approval or declination, or for additional information that is required?		
	Is there a consensus among the Performing Organization Management that the selection process was objective and fair?		

Phase Risks / Ways to Avoid Pitfalls

It is not always easy to see why good Project Origination procedures, resulting in a well thought out selection of projects, are so critical to the success of the Performing Organization. Hopefully, now that you have read this section, it is easy for you to understand and you can help others see the light!

What are some of the key elements of Project Origination that require the most attention? The following table identifies processes and tasks that are highlighted in this section.

Figure 1-5 Importance of Project Origination Process - Avoiding Pitfalls

Process	Task	Why is it Important?
Develop Project Proposal	Develop Business Case	This document is the basis of the project's acceptance or rejection not only in this phase, but throughout the rest of the project lifecycle.
	Develop Proposed Solution	Having the proposed solution approved before launching into project activities protects the project team, the project, and the whole organization from anarchy.
Select Projects	Choose Projects	Selection of the projects with the greatest value and greatest chance for success is key to the success of any organization.

Pitfall #1 – IT'S NOT THAT EXPENSIVE, LET'S DO IT!

A high-level cost/benefit analysis must be included in your proposal. It might initially appear that a wonderful benefit to your employees is to supply donuts every day. It might build morale. It might increase their energy levels from the sugar high. However, what are the costs? Good donuts cost money. Could agency funds be expended elsewhere for greater benefit? Is there a less distracting morale builder? There may be decreased productivity as the post-sugar slump hits. Should fresh fruit be considered instead? Cleaning costs might increase as crumb trails cover the floors. You might need to hire pest control as the ants and mice move in. Should the idea of an agency-provided snack be vetoed, as the outcome would actually be more of a problem than it is a benefit?

Your proposal must clearly show that you have at least considered the cons as well as the pros. It must show that you have examined the costs as well as the benefits. It must exhibit that you've considered the long-term ramifications as well as the short-term gains.

Pitfall #2 – CHICKEN BEFORE EGG, INITIATION BEFORE APPROVAL

It's very tempting to get the project started before you get final approval as a way of showing management what a great idea it is. ("I'll show them what a good idea this is and they won't be able to say no!") For novice Project Managers, and for organizations first implementing a formal methodology, it may be very easy to go too far into Project Initiation and Project Planning while you create the proposal for the project. ("Once we expend the resources to do the planning, it doesn't even make sense to turn down the Project Proposal.")

Moving into Project Initiation and Project Planning before the project has received approval through the project selection process can lead to wasted time and resources, especially if the project is not ultimately approved. If this is done repeatedly, it could lead to a loss of trust in those involved – the originator of the proposal as well as the selection committee and the Project Sponsor. A delicate balance must be maintained between providing enough information to adequately support your Project Proposal and expending too much time and effort (read "expense") at this phase. But don't ever throw anything out! If you accidentally gather more information than you need, save it for Project Initiation and Planning after your proposal IS approved.

Pitfall #3 – ONE PLUS ONE DOES NOT EQUAL TWO

Selecting the proper combination of projects to be worked on simultaneously within an organization is often a delicate balancing act. If Project A is going to take six months, and Project B is going to take eight months, you cannot conclude that working on the two projects simultaneously means they will both be done at the end of eight months. Both projects may require the same resource during the first two months. Even if both projects are very high priority, it may make more sense to delay the start of one for several months to allow resources to concentrate in one place. The outcome may very well be that more total work can be accomplished.

For example, if you have one staff person doing a task in two different cities that requires three days each, she can get both tasks done in 10 days if she spends three consecutive days in city A and three consecutive days in city B. However, if you make her do both by spending one day at a time in each city, you add travel days and weekends for a total of seven additional days. This may seem to be an extreme example, but it has a similar effect to going back and forth between tasks. It takes time to repeatedly wrap up and pick up new tasks.

Too many projects at once can result in so much task thrashing that very little gets done. Determining the proper combination of projects to be done at the same time requires that each project have clear resource requirements and time schedules. At a high level, this can be determined during Project Origination. Dependencies between projects must be considered at this time.

Pitfall #4 – CONGRATULATIONS! YOUR PROJECT WAS SELECTED. NOW WAIT

The unpredictable nature of the state budget process is such that months, if not years, may have elapsed between that euphoric moment you learned that your dream project passed its final Origination hurdle, and the day that you, wizened, weary and bedraggled –but infinitely more astute – actually performed the first Initiation task by asking, “Whazzit all about?”

Often, by the time the project actually gets going, original players have either gone to bigger and better things, or have forgotten all about your puny little project, and the only thing that stands between your success and oblivion is good documentation. Dust off that old Business Case; dig out that forgotten Proposed Solution; and shake that Proposal Decision Notice into any face that dares to challenge your authority to proceed. Anticipate – and mitigate – the consequences of the likely delay by developing good Origination documentation, keeping it ready and up to date, and keeping your eyes peeled for good candidates for the eventual Project Team.

Frequently Asked Questions**Why should project selection be done at the enterprise level? I know how to run my division!**

No one has expertise in every area. Division heads do not usually know all of the activities in every other division. How often have you seen more than one division inventing solutions to the same problem? Not only do you waste resources developing multiple solutions, you then continue to waste resources maintaining two solutions to one problem. An enterprise view, with appropriate executive oversight, of all initiatives is vital to coordinate activities and maximize productive use of time.

How am I supposed to make the Director (Commissioner, Chairman, etc.) understand the importance of this proposal? They are just too far removed.

It is your responsibility to provide information that is sufficient to enable the Performing Organization’s executive management to understand the value of your project in the written proposal. Show the benefits. Identify the

targeted Customers. Explain the significance of the product. Illustrate the value at the level necessary to promote a clear understanding. Use the proposal to educate the executive management on the merits of your idea.

Why should we expend the time and effort to create a proposal when we could just start doing the work?

If everyone followed this philosophy, the organization would be pulling itself in so many directions that perhaps nothing of value would ever get done. Managers and executives need to manage the work of the organization to ensure its alignment with its mission. Proposals provide executive management with the information they need to manage the organization's resources.

Why should we wait for their approval?

Forging ahead without the appropriate approvals results in wasted resources if the proposal is declined, significantly altered, or delayed. For example, moving ahead without approval could cause you to use technology that executive management has already chosen to replace and you will now have to start over with a new hardware and software platform. The executive staff representatives on the selection committee may be privy to information that is not publicly announced yet. It is the responsibility of the executive staff to determine the priorities that staff is to address.

The benefits of the project do not equate to cost savings. Should I even bother to submit a project proposal?

Yes. Projects are evaluated based on multiple criteria, not just cost. Some projects, which have no cost savings, are initiated based on other benefits such as their ability to improve customer service.